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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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THE DEMOGRAPHIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR 25X1Summary

High fertility levels in Iran and Iraq will more than offset deaths already suffered or anticipated in the Iran-Iraq war and assure that the populations of both nations will grow only slightly less rapidly because of the war. The number of young men in their teens and early twenties will continue to increase rapidly in both countries during the remainder of the 1980s. War related population losses, light when compared to those of World War I, will not place significant demographic constraints on post-war recovery. The war will, in effect, postpone the day when both the Iranian and Iraqi regimes must cope with high levels of youth unemployment--a consequence of persistent rapid rates of population growth. 25X1

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The Numbers of War-Related Deaths

Western correspondents covering the Iran-Iraq war have drawn similarities between the intensity of fighting and casualties in the Iran-Iraq war and those in World War I. According to our calculations, both Iranian and Iraqi military casualties, as a percentage of total national population, fall far short of the losses suffered by combatants in World War I. Confirmed military

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deaths in the Iran-Iraq war represent a loss of approximately 0.5 percent of Iran's and 0.6 percent of Iraq's population at the outset of the war (Table 1). Even our high-range estimates for military deaths show only a 1.6 percent loss for Iran and a 1.7 percent loss for Iraq. Among the front line countries in World War I, France lost 3.3 percent of its pre-war population to military deaths; Germany lost 3.0 percent; and Austria-Hungary, 2.1 percent. []

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Civilian deaths and refugee movements caused by the Iran-Iraq war have also been light compared with Europe's experience in World War I. We estimate civilian deaths for the Iran-Iraq war at about 60,000--mostly Iranians. []

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[] the initial Iraqi invasion created at least 1.5 million Iranian refugees, and most refugees still have been unable to return home. Iraqi civilians have suffered few war-related deaths or population displacements. Only a few thousand Iraqi civilians have moved from small villages in the sparsely settled area south of Al Basrah. []

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In Europe, excluding the Soviet Union, 5 million civilians who would not have died given pre-war death rates perished during World War I. Civilian deaths in Belgium exceeded by two-and-one-half times the number of military casualties. Combined civilian losses and military deaths totalled 5.4 percent of Belgium's pre-World War I population (Table 1). []

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The Demographic Consequences of the Casualties

A Smaller Youth Cohort

The concentration of the military casualties of the Iran-Iraq war among males in their teens and early twenties will leave a permanent mark on the age and sex structure of each country's population. In Iran, at least 200,000 (5 percent) of the 3,829,000 males between the ages of 15 and 24 have died during the four years of fighting, according to our estimates based on all-source reporting (Figure 1). In Iraq, deaths of young men in the same age group have totalled 75,000 (6 percent) out of 1,281,000 (Figure 2). In World War I, in contrast, France and Germany lost approximately 20 percent of their male populations 20-24 years old. []

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Birth Rates Probably Unchanged

We do not believe that war mobilization has disrupted expected birth rates to any significant extent in either Iran or Iraq. Away from the battlefield, we expect that traditional patterns of early marriage and childbearing have continued undisturbed by the war. Military personnel on both sides are granted frequent leave and Iranian young women are extolled to marry wounded veterans and war widows to promptly remarry, according to press reports. []

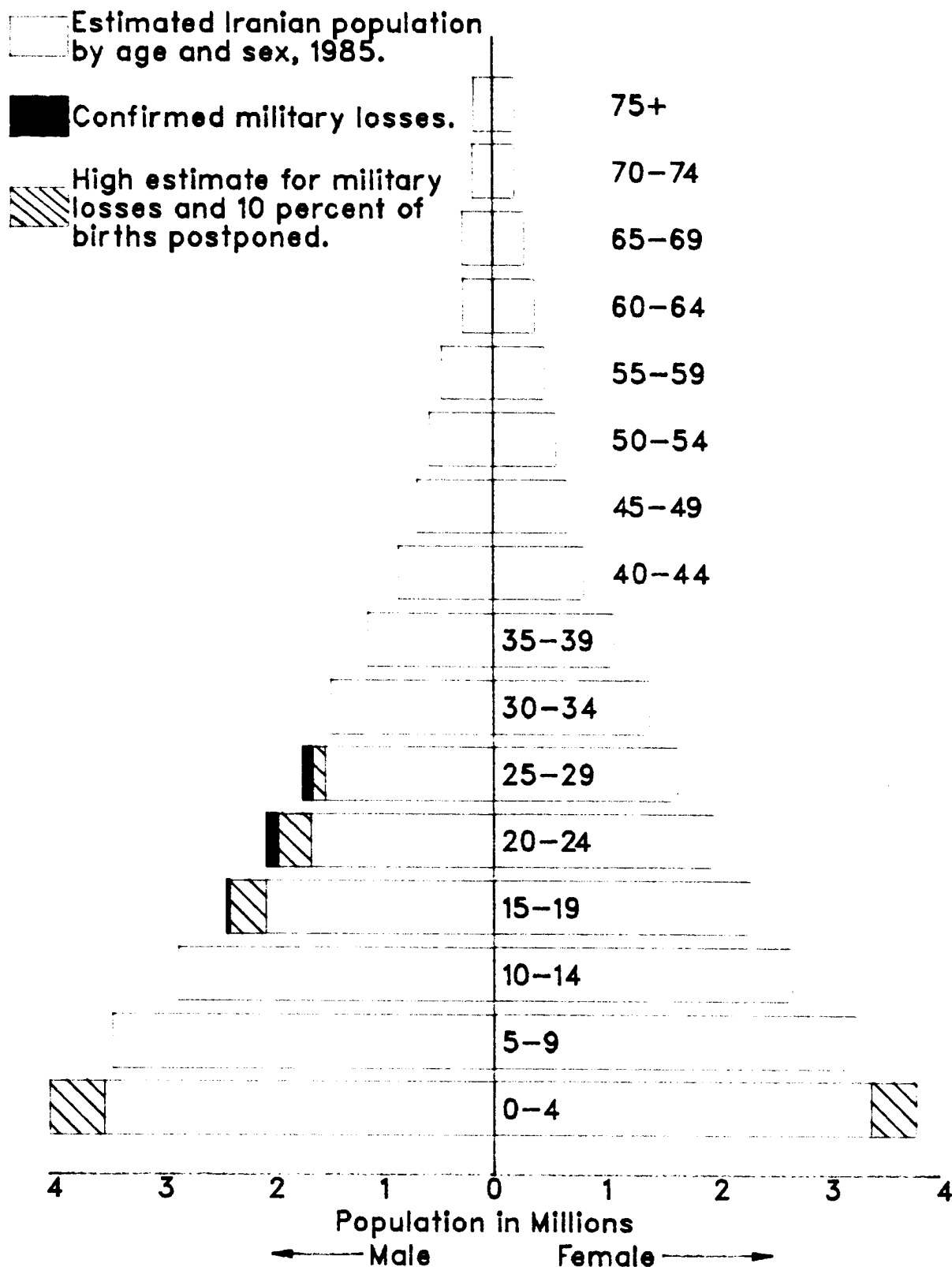
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Table 1. Comparison of Estimated Population Losses Resulting from the Iran-Iraq War and World War I.

Countries	Pre-War Popula- tion	<u>War-Related Population losses (In Thousands)</u>				<u>Percentage Share of Pre- war Population</u>	
		Military Deaths	Civilian Deaths Losses	Births Postponed Deaths	Total Population Losses	Military Deaths	All Losses
Iran	38,120	200	60	—	260	0.5	0.7
Iraq	13,130	75	—	—	75	0.6	0.6
Europe (exc. USSR)	318,871	6,578	5,010	10,809	22,397	2.1	7.0
United Kingdom	46,085	744	402	642	1,788	1.6	3.9
England & Wales	36,967	641	329	543	1,513	1.7	4.1
Scotland	4,747	83	34	63	180	1.8	3.8
Ireland	4,371	20	39	36	95	0.5	2.2
France	39,800	1,320	240	1514	3,074	3.3	7.7
Belgium	7,662	40	102	274	416	0.5	5.4
Italy	35,859	700	800	1235	2,735	2.0	7.6
Serbia & Montenegro	3,400	325	450	289	1,064	9.6	31.3
Romania	7,771	250	430	408	1,088	3.2	14.0
Greece	4,732	25	100	170	295	0.5	6.2
Portugal	6,155	4	157	103	264	0.1	4.3
Germany	67,790	2,000	737	2,699	5,436	3.0	8.0
Austria-Hungary	53,018	1,100	963	3,000	5,063	2.1	9.5
Bulgaria	4,852	70	98	276	444	1.4	9.2
Spain	20,578	—	321	113	434	0.0	2.1

Iran: Population Pyramid Illustrating Estimated Demographic Impact of the Iran-Iraq War in 1985

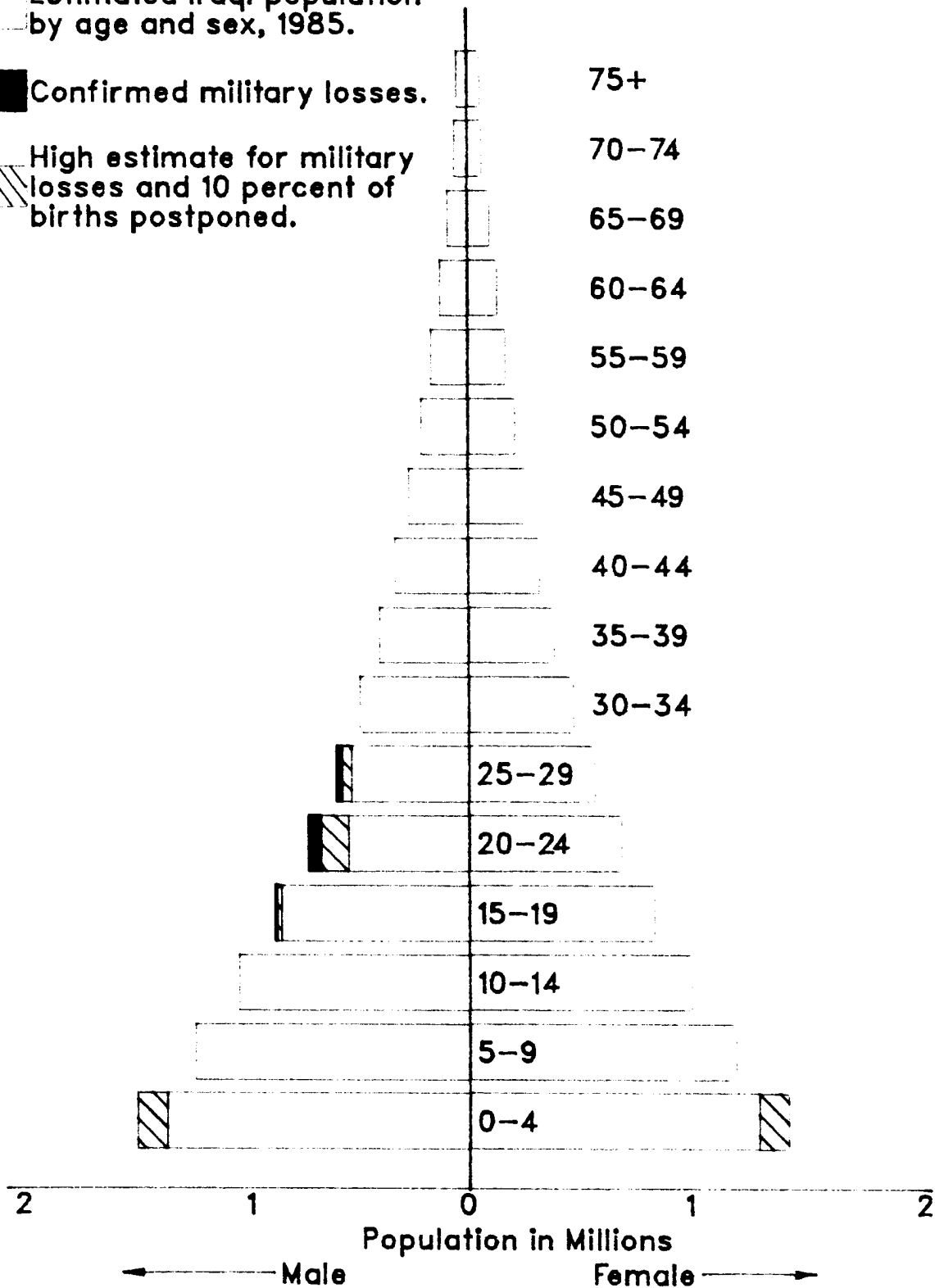


Iraq: Population Pyramid Illustrating Estimated Demographic Impact of the Iran-Iraq War in 1985

Estimated Iraqi population by age and sex, 1985.

Confirmed military losses.

High estimate for military losses and 10 percent of births postponed.



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High levels of fertility in both countries (an average of six live births per woman of reproductive age, according to United Nations estimates) assure that the populations of both countries will continue to grow rapidly in spite of the war deaths. We expect Iran's population to increase by 6.0 million people between 1980 and 1985. Iraq's population will grow by 2.3 million during the same period (Table 2 and Figure 3). []

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In contrast to the expected continuation of rapid population growth in Iran and Iraq, Europe's population in 1920 was only about what it had been at the outset of World War I in 1914 (319 million) because births during the war only offset mortality losses. A decline in European birth rates that had begun before the war accelerated sharply during the war. Military mobilization caused marriages and births to be postponed. These postponed births totalled an estimated 10.8 million--a population loss considerably larger than the 6.6 million military dead (Table 1). This temporary drop in fertility between 1914 and 1919 resulted in newborn age groups one-half to one-third the size they would have been had there not been a war. []

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The Effect of a Drop in Birthrates and Higher Death Rates at the Front.

Subsequent data collection may show that birth rates have declined during the war and that war related deaths have been higher than those confirmed to date:

Iran. If we assume that delayed marriages and postponed childbearing associated with military mobilization and disruptions to civilian life caused a ten percent drop in the numbers of births, Iran would have about 721,000 fewer children under five in 1985 than if birth and infant death rates continued at their expected levels. This loss, combined with our high-range estimates from all source reporting for civilian and military deaths (660,000) would yield a total Iranian population loss of about 1,381,000 (3.6 percent of the prewar population) for the 1980 to 1985 period (Table 2). []

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Iraq. A similar ten percent drop in the number of births for Iraq would represent a population loss by 1985 of 262,000 children under five. This loss, combined with high-range estimates for civilian and military deaths (225,000), would yield a total Iraqi population loss of about 487,000 (3.7 percent of the pre-war population) for the 1980 to 1985 period (Table 2). []

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Immigration and Emigration

The war has had an uneven effect on immigration and emigration for Iran and Iraq that in turn influences the population size of the two countries. In Iran, war-related international population movements have been inconsequential. In

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Table 2. Alternative Demographic Outcomes for Iran and Iraq Under Different Scenarios for the War 1980-1985

Country/War Scenario	1980 Pre-War Population	War-Related Population Losses (In Thousands)				Share of Pre-War Population (Percent)	1985 Population
		Military Deaths	Civilian Deaths	Births Postponed	Total Population Losses		
<u>IRAN</u>							
1. Confirmed Mortality Losses	38,120	200	60	—	260	0.7	44,123
2. High estimates for mortality losses and ten percent fertility decline	38,120	600	60	721	1,381	3.6	43,002
3. No War	38,120	—	—	—	—	—	44,383
<u>IRAQ</u>							
1. Confirmed mortality losses	13,130	75	—	—	75	0.6	15,400
2. High estimate for mortality losses and ten percent fertility decline	13,130	225	—	262	487	3.7	14,988
3. No War	13,130	—	—	—	—	—	15,475

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Iraq, the war has led to the departure of part of the large foreign labor force. ☐

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Iran. In Iran, neither immigration nor emigration has significantly influenced the size of the population since the war began. Roughly 15,000 Shias of Iranian descent who were expelled by Iraq have been isolated by Iranian authorities who view them as potential Iraqi sympathizers. According to Iranian press reports, the number of expatriates (a few thousand) has remained about the same during the course of the war. ☐

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Iraq. In Iraq, about one-third of the 1.5 million foreign workers (about 1.3 million of them Egyptians) who entered the country in the mid 1970s have left since 1982. Burgeoning oil revenues prior to the war encouraged Iraq to undertake ambitious economic development projects which required the help of foreign workers. These projects were continued during the early days of the war. As a result of economic constraints and fighting around Al Basrah, however, as many as one-half of the 250,000 Asian expatriate workers and thirty percent of the Egyptians were gone by early 1984, according to the US Interests Section in Baghdad. An expanded war and depressed economy would further accelerate the foreign workers' departure. ☐

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The Demographic Outlook

We calculate that both countries will be able to sustain their current casualty rates and maintain current military recruiting patterns without encountering any population resource limits. Rapid rates of population growth over the past 15-20 years guarantee that both countries will have growing teen-age male populations throughout the 1980s--even with the military casualties. In Iran, the number of 15-17 year old males will increase by about 550,000 per year in the second half of the 1980s; in Iraq, the number will increase by about 180,000 per year. ☐

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We do not believe that the war will place demographic constraints on post-war recovery as did the heavy manpower losses of World War I. Instead, the war will only postpone the day when the governments of Iran and Iraq will be challenged by the chronic population problems typical of rapidly growing developing countries--rising unemployment, particularly among their youth, and continuing rapid rural to urban migration--both of which tax the capacity of regimes to govern effectively. ☐

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If, as we expect, the war settles into a war of attrition, the populations of both Iran and Iraq will grow only slightly less rapidly than if there were no war. Iran's population in 1990 would be roughly 50.6 million, or only 0.4 million less than expected if there had been no war. For Iraq, the war-of-attrition scenario will result in a 1990 population of about 18.0 million or 150,000 less than expected under a no-war scenario (Table 3 and Figure 3). ☐

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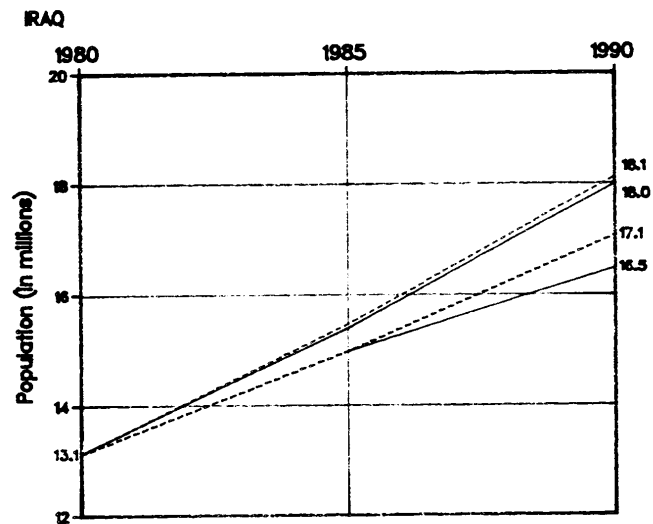
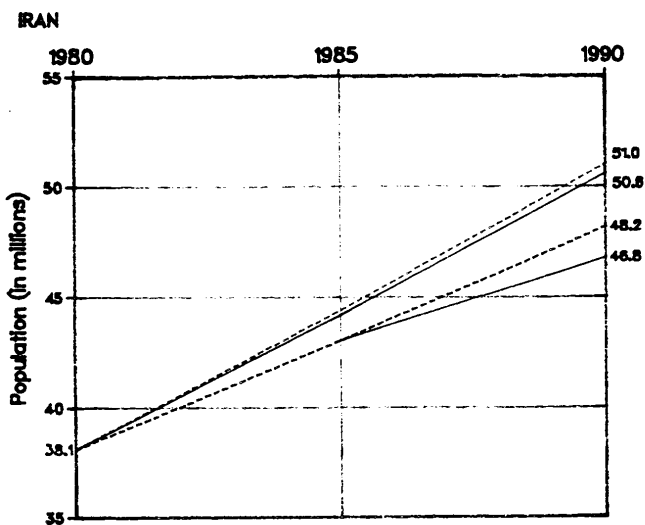
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Table 3. Alternative Demographic Outcomes for Iran and Iraq Under Different Scenarios for the War, 1985-1990.

War-Related Population Losses (In Thousands)

Country/War Scenario	1985 Population	Military Casualties	Civilian Deaths	Births Postponed	Total Population Losses	Share of 1985 Population (Percent)	1990 Population
<u>IRAN</u>							
1. War of attrition	44,123	200	60	—	260	0.6	50,603
2. High estimate for mortality losses and ten percent fertility decline	43,002	600	60	905	1,565	3.6	48,087
3. Major escalation of war to scale of World War I in France	43,002	1,200	240	1,810	3,250	7.6	46,402
4. No war	44,383	—	—	—	—	—	51,033
<u>IRAQ</u>							
1. War of attrition	15,400	75	—	—	75	0.5	17,986
2. High estimate for mortality losses and ten percent fertility decline	14,988	225	—	350	575	3.8	17,074
3. Major escalation of war to scale of World War I in France	14,988	450	8	700	1,158	7.7	16,491
4. No War 1980-1990	15,475	—	—	—	—	—	18,136

Alternative Population Growth Consequences of the Iran-Iraq War



- No war.
- Confirmed military and war-related civilian deaths to 1985 continued as a war of attrition to 1990.
- High estimates for military deaths and a 10 percent loss of births.
- Losses comparable to France's in World War I.

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Assuming a continuation of our high estimates for mortality losses and a 10 percent reduction in the expected number of births, cumulative population losses would be 2.9 million for Iran and 1.1 million for Iraq by 1990.

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An Alternative Scenario: World War I Revisited

Even if, over the next several years, fighting between Iran and Iraq escalates dramatically, we calculate that continuing high rates of natural increase will enable their populations to cope demographically with population losses. Losses on the scale of World War I would require:

- Military deaths six times those now confirmed dead, or twice the current highest estimates for military losses.
- Civilian war-related deaths eight times higher than experienced to date.
- Postponed births representing population losses of 20 percent compared with the expected under-five 1990 population.

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Even under this high casualty and fertility loss scenario, Iran's population will still grow at the rate of 1.5 percent annually, Iraq at 1.9 percent annually--roughly half their current rates of growth but near the world's overall 1.8 percent annual rate of growth.

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The high rate of casualties, however, would significantly alter the population size and structure of both Iran and Iraq.

- For Iran, military deaths would total 1.2 million for the five-year period and war-related civilian deaths and declines in fertility would cause a population loss of about 3.3 million.
- For Iraq, military deaths would total approximately 450,000 and civilian deaths and fertility declines would create a total population loss of approximately 1.2 million.
- For both countries, the casualties would be concentrated among young males; higher birth deficits would reduce the numbers of children under five years in 1990.

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SUBJECT: Iran-Iraq War: Demographic Implications

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Internal Distribution

Original - C/SO/I

1 - DDI

1 - DDI Registry

1 - C/DDO/NE

1 - C/DDO/NE/

1 - C/DDO/NE/

1 - VC/NIC

1 - NIC/AG

1 - C/PES

1 - PDB Staff

4 - CPAS/IMD/CB

1 - CPAS/Foreign Liaison Staff

1 - CPAS/ISS

1 -

1 -

1 - NIO/NESA

1 - D/NESA

1 - DD/NESA

1 - NESA/PS

1 - C/NESA/SO

1 - C/NESA/PG

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